

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMCONSUL BREMEN

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AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: GW, PINT

SUBJECT: WEHNER IN TROUBLE

REF: BONN 11435

SUMMARY: WEHNER HAS RETURNED

TO BONN IN WAKE OF NEW CHARGES AGAINST SPD WHIP WIENAND

IN PAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR. PROBABLE REOPENING OF THIS

AND STEINER AFFAIR AND BEGINNING OF PUBLIC HEARINGS IN

GUILLAUME CASE WILL MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR THE SPD AND

COULD PUT WEHNER HIMSELF IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. COVER STORY IN AUGUST 26 SPIEGEL, SUBSTANCE OF WHICH

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LEAKED SEVERAL DAYS AGO, REPORTS NEW AND POTENTIALLY

DAMAGING TESTIMONY AGAINST SPD WHIP WIENAND BY FORMER PAN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGER TROMMER. SPIEGEL ASSERTS THAT TROMMER HAS REPUDIATED TESTIMONY GIVEN IN 1972 AND HAS NOW CONFESSED THAT WIENAND WAS A PAID CONSULTANT FOR THE NOW NON-EXISTENT PAN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FLIGHT COMPANY. THE TROMMER TESTIMONY THUS PROVIDES NEW EVIDENCE FOR CHARGES THAT WIENAND IS GUILTY OF TAX EVASION AND BRIBERY.

2. THE OPPOSITION HAS CALLED FOR WIENAND'S RESIGNATION AND FOR A REOPENING OF PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATIONS OF BOTH THE PAN INTERNATIONAL AND THE STEINER AFFAIR. ATTENTION IS FOCUSED NOT ON WIENAND, HOWEVER, BUT ON HIS PROTECTOR, SPD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP CHAIRMAN, HERBERT WEHNER, WHO RETURNED TO BONN
AUGUST 25.

3. WEHNER HAS CONSISTENTLY DEFENDED WIENAND AND BACKED HIM TO THE HILT WHEN THE PAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR FIRST BROKE IN 1972. THE QUESTION BEING ASKED MOST LOUDLY OF COURSE BY THE CDU/CSU, IS WHY.

4. ALL THIS ALSO BRINGS UP THE STEINER AFFAIR AGAIN AND OPENS UP THE OLD QUESTION OF WHETHER WIENAND DID OR DID NOT PAY STEINER DM 50,000 TO ABSTAIN ON THE 1972 NO CONFIDENCE MOTION ON THE EASTERN TREATIES. ALSO BEGINNING TO COME INTO THE PUBLIC LIMELIGHT AGAIN IS THE GUILLAUME CASE, WITH PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED TO OPEN TOMORROW.

5. THE OPPOSITION HAS ALREADY STARTED TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION TO THE FULLEST, ACCUSING THE SPD OF A "WATER-GATE COVER-UP MENTALITY". IN ADDITION TO WHAT THIS COMPLEX OF SCANDALS COULD DO TO THE SPD'S PUBLIC IMAGE IS WHAT IT COULD DO TO WEHNER HIMSELF. IT IS NOT CERTAIN HOW MUCH FURTHER WEHNER WILL GO TO PROTECT WIENAND. (WIENAND HAS BEEN IN A CLINIC NEAR THE GARDA SEE SINCE HE REPORTEDLY COLLAPSED IN WEHNER'S OFFICE IN EARLY JULY, AND COULD CONCEIVABLY RESIGN FOR "HEALTH REASONS".) BUT THE OPPOSITION IS AIMING MORE FOR WEHNER THAN FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WIENAND, AND MAY KNOW MORE ABOUT THE WIENAND-WEHNER RELATIONSHIP THAN HAS YET COME TO LIGHT.

6. THERE ARE ALSO THOSE IN THE SPD WHO DISLIKE WEHNER AND ARE PARTICULARLY RESENTFUL OF HIS SUSPECTED CRUCIAL ROLE IN BRANDT'S RESIGNATION (REFTEL). HOWEVER, THE SPD CAN ILL AFFORD THE DISRUPTION THAT A WEHNER DEPARTURE WOULD WORK ON THE PARTY AT THIS TIME, AND SCHMIDT

PROBABLY KNOWS THIS.

CASH

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